BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Emanuel N. Sproat

Emanuel (Manny) Sproat was born in 1916 in Pauoa, Oʻahu. His father, Jacob William Sproat, was originally from Warrensburg, Missouri, and came to Hawaiʻi to become a member of the Provisional Government Army following the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Emanuel Sproat's mother was Clara Raymond, a part-Hawaiian schoolteacher from Kohala on the Big Island.

When Sproat was a year old, his family moved to the Big Island, where his father got a job with the Kohala Ditch Company. Emanuel attended Waiākea Kai School for the first grade, then Makapala School in Niuliʻi (Kohala) through the fourth grade.

Beginning with the fifth grade, Sproat was sent to Honolulu to attend the Kamehameha Schools, living with a brother on Fort Street. He attended Aliʻiolani School for grades seven and eight, and Roosevelt High School for grade nine. Sproat returned to Kamehameha the following year and graduated in 1937.

In the summer of 1936, while still a student at Kamehameha, Sproat volunteered to be a participant on the Panalāʻau expedition. He was a colonist on Jarvis Island from July to October, along with Solomon Kalama, Jacob Haili, and Yau Fai Lum.

After graduating from Kamehameha, Sproat enrolled at the University of Hawaiʻi, receiving a bachelor's degree in economics in 1941. Commissioned a second lieutenant out of UH ROTC, Sproat enlisted in the U.S. Army two months prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, serving in the South Pacific. Following the war, he worked for the U.S. civil service as a trade specialist for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) in Guam, Saipan, Chuuk, and Kosrae. When the RFC disbanded in 1947, Sproat continued his civil service in Pohnpei, Guam, and Saipan. He retired in 1972.

In 1952, he married Kiyooko Moriyama, who is of Pohnpeian and Japanese descent. They raised three children. At the time of the interview in 2003, the couple lived in Kailua, Oʻahu.

Tape No. 38-18-1-03

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Emanuel Sproat (MS)

December 9, 2003

Kailua, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Noelle Kahanu (NK)

WN: This is an interview with Emanuel Sproat for the Panalā'au oral history project on December 9, 2003, and we're at his home in Kailua, O'ahu. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Noelle Kahanu.

Okay, Manny, let's start by having you tell us when and where you were born.

ES: Oh, well, I was born on O'ahu, this island. . . .

WN: What part of O'ahu?

ES: I was right close to, I can't think of that. . . .

WN: Was it at Pauoa?

ES: Yeah, Pauoa Valley.

WN: Oh, okay.

ES: Nineteen-seventeen, eh?

WN: Mm-hmm. And you told me that right when you were about one year old, you folks moved . . .

ES: Yeah, then we moved to the Big Island, back to Kohala. And my father got a job with the Kohala Ditch Company. He was a manager there, so we moved back to the Big Island. My father was kind of a loose-foot guy. He traveled all over. (Chuckles) He didn't stay long in one place, eh?

WN: Tell me something about your father. What kind of background did he have and how did he eventually get to Hawai'i?

ES: Well, he---I don't think he had much schooling. He probably went to the eighth grade. And he left home (Warrensburg, Missouri) when he was sixteen. And, in those days, traveled west, eh? He went to California. But it took several years to get down there, you know. I guess he worked for a couple years along the way as he went to California. And, I think, around 1894 or so, he was riding through San Joaquin Valley. Those days there was nothing. No development in that area. Everybody had rode on horses, you know, and it was the Wild West then. And one day, he was on his way to San Francisco, and he got in a fight with another guy because the guy stole his bridle that you use on a horse, you know. He stole his bridle, and the guy took off and he got his rifle and he shot the guy as he was going over the horizon, you know. And, he just---from that he was worried, he thought he had maybe killed the guy. So, he took off and went to San Francisco. And when he was there he saw a sign, it said, "Hiring people that would like to join the PG [Provisional Government] Army in Hawai'i." And he saw the sign, so he went in and joined the group that was going. Got on a ship, and that's how he got to Hawai'i. Way back in 1894, '93, '94, I think it was.

WN: So he was a member of the PG. . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: Army?

ES: Yeah, that's right. And, I guess, you know, that time Queen Lili'uokalani was put in prison then, sort of like house arrest. And my father and the other people that were in that PG Army were used to guard the Queen. He used to talk to Queen Lili'uokalani all the time, he was one of the guards at the station there.

WN: Did he tell you about some of things they talked about?

ES: Not particularly. He didn't tell me much about that.

WN: Were most of the Provisional Government Army from the Mainland?

ES: Yeah, they were all *Haole*s.

WN: They all were *Haole*s?

ES: Yeah, all *Haole*s mostly from the Mainland, some local *Haole*s, too, I guess. And, I don't know how long he was in there—four years or five years, something like that. Then after, I guess when the Provisional Government was formed, they formed their own government then they disbanded the army. And, I guess when he left the Provisional

Government Army, he worked as a mounted policeman in Honolulu, as a Honolulu policeman for a couple years. And, he left, then he went to the Big Island. But shortly after he got out of the Provisional Government Army, I guess he met my mother and they were married just at the turn of the century. After, he was in the mounted police in Honolulu a couple of years then he decided to go to the Big Island see, and went over to the Big Island. And he got a job with Parker Ranch. He worked for the Parker Ranch for many years.

WN: And what about your mother, was she a Waimea girl, Big Island girl?

ES: No, they're from Kohala. Do you know where Pololū Valley is?

WN: Mm-hmm [yes].

ES: Yeah. Her family owned property in that valley, Pololū Valley, yeah? That's where they were from.

WN: So your mother was Clara Raymond?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Hawaiian, Spanish.

ES: Yeah, her father was Spanish; and mother, Hawaiian. And her mother was---their family were canoe workers in the old days in Hawai'i. I guess, those days, every family had a profession of some kind or another, you know. They were specialized in canoe making. And, that was the way it was. But, I don't know how she met this Spanish guy (chuckles). She never told me. But she was educated in the---in those days they, the missionaries, you know, had seminary schooling, and she went to the Kohala Seminary. I don't know how many years it was. Sort of like a normal school they called it in those days, yeah?

WN: Mm-hmm. A teacher-training school.

ES: Yeah, but all in Hawaiian, not in English. And she ended up, she was a schoolteacher, a Hawaiian schoolteacher for a couple years. And when she came to Honolulu for a conference, (microphone moves), of some kind, that's when she met my dad and that's how they got married. But then after that, he was a mounted police and he quit and then he went, I said, the Big Island and he got a job with the Parker Ranch. And he worked there for a number of years. He was their chief, stockman. They used to send him to the Mainland to buy horses and cattle, you know, breeding stock. That's mainly what he was doing there. All of my brothers and sisters (except one) were born there in Waimea. So, he was there quite a while.

WN: Did you folks live on your mother's family land?

ES: No. That's in Waimea. Her land was in Kohala in Pololū. When you work for the Parker Ranch they provide you a house and whatnot, no problem with the housing, it was available. But, see there were eight kids in our family.

WN: What number were you?

ES: I was the youngest. My next brother, next youngest to me—two of the youngest in our family—myself and my next youngest brother were born here on O'ahu. But all the other children were born in Waimea.

WN: So Thelma [Sproat Bugbee, EM's older sister, who passed away in 2004] was born in Waimea?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Oh. What number was Thelma?

ES: Oh, she was number five.

WN: Number five. Oh. (ES chuckles.)

So what were you folks doing in Pauoa when you were born? Did they come back?

ES: Oh yeah. My father had came back. It was after he worked for the Parker Ranch. While he was there, he got sick, yeah, and I guess—I don't know what kind of—like consumption, yeah. Had chest problems. So finally, he gave up working for the Parker Ranch, he quit. He was in the fishing business for a while in Kawaihae. And my mother's family had some property there right where the dock is now, they owned quite a bit of land there. Her family gave her that land, and they lived there for several years while he was a fisherman. He had a problem because he couldn't sell the fish he was catching. He had a boat but couldn't sell his fish because the buyers are Japanese *hui*, they wouldn't buy his fish. (Chuckles) Dad couldn't sell his fish, so finally gave it up and that's when he came back down to Honolulu. And while he was down here, he had a small business of delivering ice. He was an iceman for several years.

WN: When he came to Honolulu?

ES: Yeah. That's when my brother and I were born down here, maybe about four years after they had come back down here in Pauoa Valley.

WN: So, at age one your father got another job in Big Island?

ES: Yeah, when I was about a year old he got a job with the Kohala Ditch Company. Went back because, you know, my---we stayed in my mother's place in Pololū, after we went back for several years. Incidentally, when he was in the fishing business, and that land where they lived in Kawaihae, my mother's family gave her that land, it's about five acres from up at the Waimea area all the way down to where the dock is now. And when he got sick, got better, he decided to quit the fishing business, come back to Honolulu, he just abandoned the land, just left it, you know. Probably worth couple of million by now.

(Laughter)

ES: He just abandoned the land. And when we moved back to Kohala after he left here, he got a job with the Kohala Ditch Company as the ditch manager. And then, my mother's cousin had property in the valley then and that's where we lived, you know. We lived there for several years and then he moved, he built a house further on in Honokāne'iki. And we moved in there. And that land that my mother's cousin had given her, he gave it to the Bishop Estate. I think about ten acres or so. And the agreement was that when the children were of school age they would all be sent to Kamehameha School[s], and they would have free tuition. So, he gave the land to them. At least that's what, the. . . . I don't know, they talked him into doing that anyway. But, they never filled their promise. I went to Kam[ehameha] and my two sisters and my two brothers, older brothers, but nobody had free tuition, all had to pay. (Chuckles) So, they reneged on their promise. Anyway, that's aside. . . .

WN: What was it like growing up on the Big Island with a family of eight?

ES: Well, my oldest sibling was my sister (Ella), and she went to normal school. And she was the oldest and she was teaching school in Hilo when I was about, oh, I guess seven years old. I went to school in Hilo for first grade. Waiākea Kai now, it's probably when they had the tsunamis up there, just wipe all that area out and no more the schools, eh? But I was there for one year, in the first grade, and I went back to Kohala and we were still living in the Pololū Valley. From there I used to go to Makapala School in Niuli'i. Place called Niuli'i.

WN: Niuli'i?

ES: Yeah. Makapala School. And I was there—I skipped the second grade, went third, fourth, and fourth grade two years and from there I was sent to Honolulu. My older brother was working here in Honolulu, so he took care of us, myself and my next-oldest brother, and we were in Kamehameha Preparatory School. Fifth and sixth grade, yeah.

WN: Do you remember when you were going to come to Honolulu? How did you feel about that?

ES: I never gave it much thought. I didn't mind it because I liked school, you know, when I was a kid. It was an opportunity to learn more, so. . . .

WN: When you were growing up in Kohala side what did you do to have good fun as a kid? Like what kinds of things did you do?

ES: Oh well, mostly in school we used to have all kinds of---we used to have play in a lot of sports, you know. Mostly wrestling and whatnot. But we used to do a lot of riding. What we used to do is train horses and mules, you know. Break 'em in.

WN: How did you learn how to do that?

ES: Oh, from my father and my uncle, my mother's brother. They used to make us young guys go and ride these wild animals (chuckles), and because we were young we had to go whether we liked it or not. It was pretty hard. We'd do a lot of falling. But what we used to do is take these mules and horses down to the beach, the sandy beach, and they'd have difficulty walking and bucking. And if you fall, you land on the sand, you don't get hurt. (Chuckles) That's how we used to break in these animals.

WN: I guess the sand would slow down the horses too, yeah? They wouldn't be able to (move quickly).

ES: Yeah, that's right. They couldn't run too good, you know.

Then when we came back down here I was with my brother two years in the Kamehameha Preparatory Department. It was good. I liked that training we had there. It was very good. They had a library there and I really learned how to read a lot, you know, that's where I really learned to study and read, in that Kam[ehameha] Preparatory Department. We had a good principal there.

WN: What is Kamehameha Preparatory? Was that . . .

ES: That used to be. . . .

WN: . . . from the Kamehameha Schools?

ES: . . . from the first to the sixth grade. (The Kamehameha Preparatory Department was separate from the high school.)

WN: Uh-huh.

ES: And then from there you went to the high school.

WN: Okay.

ES: Intermediate---from seventh through the twelfth was the upper school.

WN: So when you were at the Kamehameha Preparatory, where did you live?

ES: I lived with my brother right on Fort Street. He worked for the court, [Hawai'i] Supreme Court, as a clerk, you know. And my brother and I lived with him. It's right on Fort Street. They used to have a Kamehameha Alumni Hall right there on Fort Street, almost down to Beretania [Street]. Just, you know where the People's Cafe is?

WN: Yeah.

ES: Right across from there that used to be the Kamehameha Alumni Hall. And we lived there with him. He took care of us.

WN: Was the Nu'uanu Y [Young Men's Christian Association] up by that time?

ES: Yeah, the Nu'uanu Y is up further.

WN: So what kids went where . . .

ES: After I finished the preparatory sixth grade I moved, lived with my sister in Kaimukī. They had a home there on 11th Avenue and I went to seventh and eight grades in Ali'iolani, you know, Ali'iolani School (on 6th and Wai'alae avenues).

WN: English-standard, huh?

ES: Yeah. Ali'iolani for seventh and eighth grade.

WN: How come you didn't go to Kamehameha?

ES: Well, later on I did. Then after, I guess eighth grade intermediate, I went to high school. I went one year to Roosevelt, ninth grade, and I didn't like it so I talked to my brother and I said, "Put me back in Kam[ehameha]."

WN: You know, how come you left in the first place? How come you went from [Kamehameha] Preparatory to Ali'iolani?

ES: Well . . .

WN You didn't just stay on to, you know . . .

ES: Yeah, I could've just gone on. It would've been better if I had gone on, but I guess my brother, it's a financial problem so I went to stay with my sister in Kaimukī. I went to seventh and eighth grade, then to Roosevelt for one year, and I didn't like that so my brother put me back in Kam[ehameha]. Kamehameha for tenth, low eleventh, high

eleventh, twelfth, four years. That's when I was with George [Kahanu] and [Arthur] Harris.

WN: So you liked Kamehameha a lot better than Roosevelt?

ES: Oh yeah, Kam[ehameha] was good. We had a real good faculty there. Good teachers. Yeah, the training was much better. I always learned. I got a good background from Kamehameha. If it wasn't for that, I don't know, maybe I wouldn't have done too well.

WN: Who were some of the good faculty over there?

ES: Well, there were so many, I don't remember their names so much anymore. One of the good ones was what's his name, that just several years ago he died. He was there in Kamehameha for years and years and years.

WN: Is that, ah, Donald [Kilolani] Mitchell?

ES: Well, Dr. Mitchell was one of them. It wasn't Mitchell, it was, I can't think of his name offhand. (It was Mr. Allen Bailey.)

WN: That's okay.

ES: And there were many. Dr. [Homer] Barnes, he was the principal when I was there a number of years. He was very good. And we had this gentleman that was teaching typing, this is the guy I can't remember his name. Taught us typing, and we had mechanical drawing. There was a teacher there that we called "Bulldog." He was a tough old guy. Strict but good. His name was Mr. Lowrey. Very good instructor. And we had a newspaper, you know, and we had a teacher there that taught newswriting, (Mr. Hudson). Very good. Many things, very good instructors.

WN: What was the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] like?

ES: Oh, the best. We were always the best. (Chuckles) In riflery and marching and whatnot, nobody could come near the Kam[ehameha] School, we were always the best.

NK: We have about half an hour.

WN: How are we on tape? Okay. You okay? You want to take a break or anything?

ES: Yeah, I'm okay.

WN: You said in 1936 you were asked, or, I don't know. . . . How did the idea of going to Jarvis come up for you?

ES: Well, it was the summertime, you know. And I guess they were looking for boys to go down, and they were asking for volunteers, and I just went down and volunteered and they put me on.

NK: Do you remember them talking about it when you were in school?

ES: No, not in school. I just learned this on my own on the side. The school didn't talk much about it. It was sort of an outside program. They were usually taking boys that had already graduated, you know. But I was still in school when I went down there. Let's see, it was in 1936.

WN: Nineteen-thirty-six, yeah.

ES: Latter part of July. I guess they had difficulty getting enough guys to go down so they were asking around for people who could volunteer so I decided to go down. So I volunteered.

WN: So you were, this was like before your senior year then.

ES: Yeah, this was my senior year.

WN: Were you worried that you were going to miss class or school?

ES: Yeah, the thing I missed most was the football season. (Chuckles) I really am sorry I missed that. I wanted to play. I was on the first string football, and I missed that completely. Yeah, I went down in July and came back in November. And I had to make up my school work, which I did.

WN: So why did you want to volunteer to go?

ES: I liked to travel. I wanted to see different places, make a little money on the side. It was a good program. Mr. Richard Black was in charge. He's a famous guy. He's the guy that influenced us quite a bit. And the man in charge of that program was Mr. [William T.] Miller. And they were good to us. They were the ones that recruited me and—I don't know how they got these other guys, but I was the only non-graduate that went down there. I guess all the rest of the guys had already finished school when they went down, the Panalāʻau.

NK: So, was Kamehameha Schools at all involved in . . .

ES: Yeah, they were involved, but . . .

NK: . . . the recruitment process?

ES: Not in my case. I don't know how they were doing that. I don't know exactly how the program had been formulated or how they were carrying it on, but I think it was through the school. Has been so long ago I forget exactly what happened. [See introduction.] (Chuckles)

NK: All your shipmates were all Kamehameha School . . .

ES: Yeah. (Except one, Mr. Yau Fai Lum, radio operator.)

NK: . . . graduates, yeah?

ES: And they were all out of school already. I was the only one still in school. I was seventeen when I went down and these other guys were all in their twenties, already out of school. And I guess George [Kahanu] and them went down afterward, eh? After they graduated. But I missed the football season. I'm sorry about that. I really wanted to play. (Chuckles)

WN: Did you know that you were going to miss the season?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Oh, you did know.

ES: Yeah, 'cause we signed up for six months.

WN: Oh.

ES: But, baseball season came [after EM's return] so I was happy about that. (WN and MS chuckle.) I just did baseball.

WN: So, do you remember being on the [U.S.] Coast Guard boat?

ES: Oh, absolutely.

WN: What was that like leaving and going?

ES: It was a new ship that had just been sent down to Hawai'i. The *Itasca.* Just like a navy ship. When we went aboard, the first thing they did was make us work. They put us all to work, mostly in the mess hall because—clean the mess hall and serve the sailors. Bus boys. And we spent a lot—I don't know, the ship, it seems to me like we were working all the time. Soon as we finished breakfast, you'd have to get ready for lunch. And clean up and set the tables. And soon as you finish, it's time to serve the lunch and we just kept working all day long. (Chuckles) I remember many others got seasick and whatnot, but still, never mind, we had to work. They were rough on us, the sailors. But the

highlight on the trip was when we crossed the equator, they had a big ceremony. The coast guard, I guess, all the sailors, they liked that. Davey Jones, when the ceremony started, Davey Jones came up the gangplank all dressed up. They go through the ceremony and they put us all through a really rough program. We had to do all kinds of things. And they had a big canvas chute, a tube about fifty feet long, and you had to crawl through there and they put two fire hoses, one on each end, and you had to crawl through that.

WN: You mean the water shooting . . .

ES: Yeah. You had to hold your breath or else you'll drown. (Chuckles)

WN: How long did you have to crawl through?

ES: Fifty feet.

WN: Fifty feet.

ES: Quite a ways.

WN: Whoa. So you said somebody dressed—Davey Jones?

ES: Yeah, he came aboard. In the ceremony one of the sailors was dressed up in Davey Jones regalia. He climbed up the gangplank. They lowered the gangplank while the ship was in movement, you know.

WN: Was it Davey Jones or was it King Neptune? [For an account of this "King Neptune's Court" ceremony, see Alexander Kahapea, *Alika the Hawaiian,* vol. 1 (New York: Vantage Press, 1987). pp. 18–20.]

ES: Both. And they held the ceremony while we were traveling, while the ship was underway. It was rough. But we had to, like I say. . . . (Pause) And we were down there about, was going on five months in November. The relief ship came down, the *Itasca,* and brought us back. And then, I guess all of us got off, all of our group.

WN: Now do you remember what they told you about why you were doing this trip, doing this adventure?

ES: Well, the corps, they. . . . Yeah, they just said, "You go down and your mission is to occupy the island and make weather reports," and that was about it. Occupy, we were there to occupy the island. And I guess after one year, the United States claimed the island. That's what they told us. We were there to occupy the island so that we could—the government would assume control of the island after a period of time, maybe one year.

WN: Now you were assigned to Jarvis Island?

ES: Yeah. Myself, Sol Kalama, Jacob Haili and Yau Fai Lum. He [Lum] was our communicator, he was a radio operator, that went down with us. Chinese guy. He's a non-Hawaiian.

WN: Do you remember what your thoughts were when you saw Jarvis for the first time?

ES: Desert island (chuckles), there's nothing! No trees on the island, nothing would grow there because of the dry conditions. The (island) just had all this sort of, just small weeds that grew. Purslane and some grass and whatnot, nothing much else. No trees. We took some coconuts [along] and planted some on the island, but we'd have to water it all the time and after a while we quit watering and those didn't grow well and finally they died. It was too dry for coconuts. I guess they didn't do much guano work on Jarvis. Further back in the 1800s they were looking for guano through all the Pacific islands. Somehow or another they didn't do much guano work on that island. I don't know about Howland and Baker but Jarvis there was very little work.

WN: Jarvis was the one that's sort of isolated from the other two, right?

ES: Yeah. It was separated by quite a distance from Howland and Baker.

WN: So you don't remember seeing anything from the guano operations . . .

ES: No.

WN: . . . before?

ES: There were very little signs of that. A number of shipwrecks on that island.

WN: Was the *Amaranth* there?

ES: Yeah. That was the main one, *Amaranth.* That's how I learned—I looked up the meaning of *Amaranth,* you know, later on, when I came back. You know what *Amaranth* means? Fading flower. That was the name of that ship that was wrecked on the, I guess, the southern end of Jarvis. Interesting.

WN: Did you folks use any of the, anything that was on the ship, for your folks' use?

ES: No, there wasn't much, there wasn't much there. We didn't use much of that on—the buildings that were put up were all material that we took down on the Coast Guard ship.

WN: What did you put up?

ES: We put up a housing unit for us and also weather equipment. We had a weather vane and all that kind of stuff but mostly the barracks where we lived.

WN: What about the people that were, the crew that was there . . . before you?

ES: In fact, Nora Stewart's father was there.

NK: Larry Stewart.

ES: Construction carpenter that went down with us and he built these buildings while we were—the ship was there. He was the one that went down with us and put up the—well, we were his helpers at putting up these barracks.

NK: They called them the government houses, yeah?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Can we take a break right here? We're going to change the tape.

ES: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: What were some of the things you had to do being on Jarvis?

ES: Well, we had to take care of ourselves. We have to cook our breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and we used to rotate. Each guy took one week of duty for cooking, I guess like the firemen. (Laughs) Somebody had to cook, eh? Whether you know how or not, you have to take your turn.

WN: Did you know how to cook?

ES: Well, not really.

(Laughter)

ES: I learned some. But, we survived so it must have been all right. Beside that, we took weather reports every day, twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon. We had these tracer balloons. Take the speed, wind, elevation, and probably the wind and its speed, I guess. Weather reports. And that was about it. I spent a lot of time fishing. I was the only guy used to go fishing, I'd go by myself. I'd go out fishing.

WN: What kind of fishing? Net fishing?

ES: No, spearing. Then, I guess Jacob Haili had a net, throw net, he took that along. He used to do throw net fishing right out in front of our camp. *ʻĀholehole* used to come in schools. And one time he threw a net he got eighty *ʻāholehole* in one throw. But we didn't know what to do with the fish (chuckles). Can't eat it all. Dry 'em up. That was about the extent of it.

WN: What did you folks dry it on? Did you have racks or anything?

ES: Yeah, we just put 'em up on a rack. Put a little salt on them, dry 'em. Dried real quickly. Keep the flies off. But it didn't take long because the sun was so intense there. Really hot. Didn't take long for fish to dry. *ʻĀholehole,* they dried up like toast after one or two days.

NK: And so what kind of fish would you spear?

ES: Oh, the same kind like they do here, that all were there. The Hawaiians call it *pualu,* they didn't like that kind. *Maiko* and, oh, a lot of other fish like *manini,* all the reef stuff.

WN: What was the fish you said before *manini?*

ES: *Manini* and *maiko.*

WN: *Maiko.*

ES: *Maiko.* Yeah, it's a black fish. I forget what the English name is of that [surgeonfish]. But sometime they have *pāpio* and some of the better ones, I can't think of the names.

WN: Did you have any problems with sharks?

ES: No. There were sharks around, but we didn't go out because that reef is not very extensive. Just a short barrier reef you know. More like what they call a fringing reef. From the island it goes out maybe about fifty yards, that's about it. Not a very large extended reef, you know. Small reef. And we had only this one channel where the ships used to land and the small boats used to come in. A lot of tide, you know, so we didn't go fishing in the channel because of the riptide. You couldn't swim against it. It was so strong. But usually we used to go fishing when the fish come in at the high tide. But, I don't know—Jacob Haili had a guitar and he used to play music for us and sing and that was our recreation mostly (chuckles).

WN: So singing, fishing, what, anything else?

ES: Used to play cards.

NK: What about the birds on the island?

ES: Oh yeah, all kinds of birds there. We tried eating some of the eggs, you know. There were boobies and curlews. Curlew is a transient, you know, it comes and flies away. But not like the boobies that stay right on the island. We tried eating some of the young squabs and the eggs didn't taste too good (chuckles). Kind of fishy tasting. (WN chuckles.) So we didn't bother them too much. But there were colonies of birds that are different. The bluefoot, boobies and, what you call, Hawaiian call it *'iwa*, eh?

NK: Frigate.

ES: Yeah, frigate birds and. . . .

NK: I think there were terns.

ES: Yeah, terns. Not too many different ones. Different types of boobies. Gooney birds we called it. We had to keep a log too, you know. Used to keep a daily log. We rotated on that once a week like cooking, rotate the log maintenance. Observe the cloud formations and whatever the weather condition. And we see birds, how many. What we did for the day, all that kind of thing.

WN: Now then, you said that you were the only student of the four of you.

ES: Yeah.

WN: You were still going to school. Did you have any kind of requirement? Did you have to keep a log or anything to do with school? Do you remember?

ES: No. I just went and I just had to make up my back work after I got back in November. I spent three months there. But I never had any difficulties because I was always a pretty good student. The only thing I had difficulties with was the mechanical drawing because you had to do so many drawings. They required it. If you don't finish, you couldn't graduate. And I only had four years to do that. These other guys were doing it for five, six, seven years. They could finish easily, you know. So I had to work on mechanical drawing right up until I graduated. It was hard. That was the tough part of the make-up work.

WN: Did you get along with the other three boys?

ES: Yeah, we got along okay. We were not very close, you know, because they were older and they were classmates. Haili and Kalama. I sort of got along better with Yau Fai Lum because he was an outsider and I was a little bit different (chuckles). But we got along, we never had any problems.

NK: Do you remember who the team leader was? Did you have an island leader?

ES: Sort of, I think our communicator was sort of like Yau Fai Lum. He was like our leader because he did the communicating, whatnot. He was a little older.

NK: Were they already on the island when you were there, or were some of them on the boat when you came down?

ES: Yeah, they had a group there, we relieved them, and they left, and we took over.

NK: So all four of you . . .

ES: Yeah.

NK: . . . were brand-new to Jarvis when you . . .

ES: Yeah. Four of us. And the other four left. But you could stay over if you wanted to, you know. Some guys they went down there they stayed for years. Like James Kamakaiwi was there for many years.

NK: And even Jacob Haili stayed for quite a while.

ES: Oh, he did, eh? I see. I didn't know. After I left, I lost contact with them. But he came back on that same time that I came back. I guess he went down again afterward.

WN: Did the people that were there just before you folks, did they tell you folks anything about Jarvis and the experience?

ES: No, not that I recall. There wasn't much to tell.

(Laughter)

So, there it is, go, good-bye! That's all they said. See you later!

(Laughter)

WN: I think George Kahanu said some things about, they went surfing? Did you folks go?

ES: Oh, no. We didn't have a board in the first place and I thought it was kind of dangerous. Our island was kind of round you know, and if you get out in the tide, you could drift away. So, I didn't, we didn't take part in that. Fishing was about it. And I don't know if you get out in the reef, the tide was, you know from east to west, the prevailing tide, the wind direction. We didn't do any surfing at all. Maybe if we had sort of like a bay with waves, and whatnot, we could do that surfing, but we didn't have. The island was kind of round and no indentations hardly. And we only had that channel coming in where

the boats used to land and the current was really strong. Get in there it'd just take you out to sea right away. No, I don't know, where was this? On Howland? Or was it on Baker that George used to go. . . .

NK: On Jarvis.

ES: On Jarvis?

NK: They built the surfboards from the pieces of the *Amaranth.*

ES: Oh, I see.

NK: Actually that was Kenneth Bell. I think he was there before. I think he went just before you.

ES: Yeah, I know it was before. Kenneth Bell, yeah, he was several years ahead of us, our class. Is he still (with us now)?

NK: Mm-hmm [yes]. He's in Hilo.

ES: He lives in Hilo? Oh . . .

NK: He's still very active. He does radio. What do you call that? Ham radio.

ES: Oh, I see. Yeah, Ken Bell, I remember him very well. In school he was a good lad.

NK: He said he used to study. All the other boys would be playing cards and he'd be with his book trying to (chuckles) read in the. . . . He said there was a separate little shack that was apart from the other buildings. . . .

ES: Uh-huh [yes].

NK: . . . that they had built, yeah? And so he had his own little apartment and he would try and study because he went to college afterward.

ES: Oh, he did, eh? Did he [eventually] go to the Mainland?

NK: I don't remember. [Kenneth Bell lived and worked on the West Coast following his graduation from Kamehameha in 1935 and his stints on Jarvis and Baker islands in 1936.]

WN: I can't remember now. I think he went to the Mainland though.

ES: What class is he in, 1935?

NK: Yeah.

ES: Yeah, he used to be a body builder you know, and exercised and did barbells and whatnot.

WN: Yeah, he made barbells out of the batteries, right? Of the *Amaranth*.

ES: Oh, they did, eh?

WN: So they didn't leave any of that stuff for you folks?

ES: No.

WN: They didn't leave surfboards or dumbbells for you folks?

ES: No.

NK: Actually I think that the surfboards were confiscated.

WN: Oh, that's right.

NK: So, you got paid three dollars [a day], yeah?

ES: Yeah.

NK: You got paid. So what did you do with all that money?

ES: I used to pay my school expenses. Every summer I used to work and I had to pay for my schooling. Same like when I went to the University [of Hawai'i], every summer I worked enough to pay my way. More or less support myself with school expenses.

WN: Did they ask you if you wanted to stay on for some more months on Jarvis? Do you remember?

ES: Well, I don't remember if they asked me but I knew I wasn't going to stay because I had to go back to school, eh? All four of us came back on that trip. I don't recall any of us staying over.

WN: What was it like when you came home? Do you remember anything?

ES: I was happy to get back (chuckles).

WN: Did they have any kind of party for you folks or anything like that?

ES: No. Not that. . . . We had a party amongst ourselves Downtown. Three of us: Sol Kalama and Jacob Haili and myself. We had a get-together and had a good time.

WN: You mean, right after you got back?

ES: Yeah, after we got back. And then I had to go back to school right away so I didn't dillydally around. I went right back to school.

NK: Did the boat stop in Samoa or. . . .

ES: No, when I went back I missed out on that. I would've been happy if they would've gone that way (chuckles). I went to Samoa many, many years later on my own. American Samoa and British Samoa used to call it in the old days. Samoa now, yeah.

WN: Did they. . . .

ES: Apia.

WN: Apia, yeah. Did they treat you like an equal? I know you were younger than the others. Because you were younger did they treat you differently?

ES: Yeah, I was the fourth man on the island and I was sort of like their younger brother. I have to listen to what they tell you. So whatever they told me, I did. But like I say, Yau Fai Lum was sort of like our headman. He was a nice guy. We got along okay, but that didn't bother us too much. They were pretty nice to me. How's Jake Haili, is he okay now?

WN: I think he passed away.

ES: He passed away?

WN: Jacob Haili, yeah.

ES: Is that right? Oh, I see. And Kalama is where? Sol Kalama. . . .

NK: Sol passed away. Sam is still alive. Sam Kalama.

ES: Sam is, yeah.

NK: But Sol passed away, I think, quite a while ago.

ES: Yeah, Sam was our class. There were a number of Kalamas, I can't keep track of all them. Sam was a big husky guy.

NK: Yeah. He went when he was a student, too.

ES: Oh, he did, eh?

NK: The islands, yeah. In fact, he's the one that said he celebrated his sixteenth birthday on the island.

WN: Oh, really.

ES: Really? (Chuckles)

NK: Sixteenth birthday.

ES: Oh, he went down early then.

WN: So you weren't the only young kid down there.

ES: Yeah, I was not the only one. Sam. . . .

NK: So did you give any consideration to going back after you graduated?

ES: No. (Chuckles)

WN: So tell us what you did. I know you graduated from Kamehameha in 1937. Tell us what happened after that.

ES: I went to the University [of Hawai'i]. So I didn't go back [to the islands] again. Maybe I would've if I hadn't gone to school.

WN: Well what were your goals from that time on? From the time you went to the University of Hawai'i? What did you. . . .

ES: I just wanted more education. During the summers I used to work, you know. And I'd work with all these big thugs (chuckles) mostly in construction and whatnot and these burly guys and they'd order you around and you'd have to work hard. And I'd say to myself, "Damn, I'm not going to do this all my life. I'm going to go to school and get a better education so I can advance myself." That's why I went to school. I learned my lesson from working outside with these guys digging ditches and doing construction work and all that kind of thing. And while I was in school [at Kamehameha] I did part-time work with the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association, you know, sugar cane experimental work. I learned a lot from that. Gave me some ideas on going to school. But all of the trainees at their Waipi'o station in Waipahu—used to be a sugar planters' research station— these guys were all college graduates in sugar technology. And they were being trained before they were sent out to plantations. And that's where I worked with those guys. You get a good idea that you need an education to do anything to advance yourself.

WN: Oh, so that was part of your high eleventh.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Kamehameha.

ES: High eleventh and twelfth. Two years.

WN: So what did you get your degree in at the university?

ES: In economics.

WN: You graduated right just as the war was about to start.

ES: Yeah. In June, while at the University [of Hawai'i] I took ROTC and I had a commission as a second lieutenant. When I got out I said to myself, "My, looks like we're gonna have a war," you know. So I decided to go in the [U.S.] Army if I could. So I wouldn't have to be drafted. I'd go in wartime, no experience, it would be bad. And I needed a job, too. After summer, September 1st, I volunteered to go in the service and I went in as a second lieutenant in September. December 7th, just a couple of months later, the war started. I was right. I was experienced, I was lucky that I went in at that time. And learned the tactics and the weapons and whatnot, so. When the war broke out, I was still a second lieutenant, and they put me in charge of the company. And I had captains and majors, whatnot, they were all assigned under me. These guys were first lieutenants, captains, majors, they were all assigned to my company. So, I was lucky. I spent five years in the army. Never saw any combat to speak of.

WN: Good (chuckles).

ES: As it turned out I wanted to leave. Our organization, we were sort of like the Japanese boys, you know. Yeah, I think they were segregated. And they started the 100th Infantry [Battalion]. All the guys that were with us went to the 100th Infantry. And we stayed back, and we were all locals. The powers-to-be didn't think much of our organization, so we didn't ever get into any combat situation. So it turned out then.

NK: Speaking of organizations, there was a organization of the colonists.

ES: Of the what?

NK: The colonists, there was a Hui Panalā'au.

ES: Oh.

NK: Did you ever attend any of their functions? Or, you know, they'd have periodic get-togethers?

ES: (No.)

NK: Did you ever. . . .

ES: Well, I got out of the army in December 16, 1945, and December 26 I left. I went to Guam to work. I got a job with the navy government and I left and I didn't come back for twenty-six years. I was out there. So, I didn't know about these organizations. I was away, so didn't get to join them. I didn't get to join any of that. This is the first I heard about it.

NK: It [Panalāʻau experience] was a relatively short amount of time in your life, you know. . . .

ES: Yeah.

NK: Six months. But did it have some sort of a lasting impact or do you, is there anything in particular that you remember about your time there?

ES: Yeah, I was glad I went, you know, and got exposed to that type of work, and mainly through the men in charge, Mr. Miller and Richard Black. They really were influential in telling us about life and what we should do and whatnot. They were good to us. And, I was happy because I had a chance to go down, and it was history, right? (Chuckles)

WN: Did you learn more, you think, doing that or by playing football? (Chuckles)

ES: Oh, I think I did better by going down there. I missed the football, but that's all right. Too bad. I did get to play baseball. Yeah, I'm sorry I missed the football, but I think my experience was better.

WN: You said that you're a part of history, what makes you say that?

ES: Well, the Panalāʻau, eh? Not too many of us went down. I often wonder what happened to James Kamakaiwi. He passed away? I think he was the guy that was down there the longest, yeah? And was it Carl Kahalewai that died down there? He had appendicitis and passed away [in 1938]. Couldn't send a emergency ship. Nowadays they could've sent a helicopter down there and picked him up. In those days that's a chance you had to take. There was always a possibility of you getting sick or getting an infection of some sort and, you know, you just had to take it. No rescue, if you go down, you get sick, too bad. He *make.* That's what happened to Carl. Gee, that was sad.

WN: Good you folks were all young.

ES: Yeah, we were young, healthy. And I still have my appendix. (Chuckles)

NK: Do you feel like Black and Miller and everybody else, do you feel like they appreciated the time that you spent there? I mean. . . .

ES: Yeah. I think so. Especially Mr. Miller. Black was kind of a. . . . He loved the limelight. And from that, he belonged to a lot of travelers' clubs all over. And I guess he was one of the guys that went to the North Pole, and he went to the South Pole, and he'd always tell about his experiences, you know. He's quite a character. But I think it was more promoting himself than worrying about us. (Chuckles) But they were nice people. He and Miller. Yeah.

WN: Okay, well, we'd like to thank you very much for your time.

ES: Oh, you're welcome. You're very welcome.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

HUI PANALĀʻAU:
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